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METAHISTORICAL SCEPTICISM IN ALEKSEI GOLDENVEIZER'S CHRONICLE OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN KYIV, 1917–1921*

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This article analyzes the memoir of a Russian-speaking Jewish lawyer, Aleksei Goldenveiser (1890–1979), as a source on the history of Kyiv during the revolutionary period (1917–1921). His work stands out among other reminiscences about the Revolution in Ukraine because of the author's unprecedented attention to details of everyday life, along with his self-identification as simply an apolitical resident of Kyiv. Especially striking is the author's satirical, even acerbic, tone in the description of all the political regimes that came to power in Kyiv during the Revolution: Ukrainian, White, and Bolshevik. This article proposes to conceptualize Goldenveizer's position as *metahistorical skepticism* or as a strategy of conscious resistance to grand narratives, which is grounded in identification with the local and a focus on everydayness. It argues the Goldenveizer developed this narrative strategy following the failure, in the summer of 1917, of the political project of a civic, multinational, and urban identity. Although Goldenveizer served on the Executive Committee of United Civic Organizations in Kyiv and, briefly, on the Small Rada of the Ukrainian Central Rada, he felt like an outsider in politics of the day and described it as an astute bystander rather than participant. Because of this position, he was the first to note the reversal of imperial hierarchies and the creation of a new category: "national minorities." At the same time, Goldenveizer consistently attempted in his memoir to check his own political and cultural biases, as one can see in his ambiguous treatment of the Ukrainian language and the Ukrainian national movement.

Keywords: Aleksei Goldenveizer; metahistorical skepticism; revolution; Ukraine; Kyiv; memoirs.

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Статья посвящена анализу воспоминаний русскоязычного еврейского адвоката Алексея Гольденвейзера (1890–1979) как источника по истории Киева революционного периода (1917–1921). Его труд выделяется среди других воспоминаний о революции на Украине благодаря беспрецедентному вниманию к деталям повседневной жизни, а также самоидентификации автора просто как аполитичного жителя Киева. Сатирический, даже желчный тон автора особенно заметен в описаниях всех политических режимов, которые приходили к власти в Киеве во время революции: украинского, белого и большевистского. Автор предлагает концептуализировать позицию Гольденвейзера как «метаисторический скептицизм», или стратегию сознательного сопротивления большим нарративам, которая базируется на идентификации с локальным и фокусе на повседневности. Показано, что Гольденвейзер выработал эту нарративную стратегию после поражения летом 1917 г. политического проекта гражданской многонациональной городской идентичности. Хотя Гольденвейзер был членом Исполнительного комитета Объединенных общественных организаций Киева, а также Малой рады Украинской центральной рады, в политике того времени он чувствовал себя аутсайдером и описывал ее как наблюдательный посторонний, а не участник. Благодаря такой позиции он первым обратил внимание на полную перестановку имперских иерархий и создание новой категории «национальных меньшинств». В то же время Гольденвейзер постоянно старался не допустить, чтобы его культурные и политические предпочтения сделали текст односторонним, что привело к неоднозначной оценке украинского языка и украинского национального движения.

Ключевые слова: Алексей Гольденвейзер; метаисторический скептицизм; революция; Украина; Киев; воспоминания.

Historians of the Revolution in Ukraine have long been acquainted with the fascinating memoir of the Russian-speaking Jewish lawyer Aleksei Goldenveizer (1890–1979), who described in great detail the many changes of power in the city of Kyiv.[1] However, researchers rarely included more than one quote from this work; most of them also read it in its truncated version from the 1930 Soviet sourcebook, which only included excerpts critical of the Ukrainian and White administrations [Гольденвейзер, 1930].[2] When the full version [Гольденвейзер, 1922] became available with the opening of the special-collections sections in major libraries and subsequent arrival of the Internet, it became obvious that Goldenveizer criticized the Bolsheviks just as harshly. His work could be used as a source of damning, often sardonic quotes about the political regimes a researcher wanted to critique, but his overall narrative of the revolutionary years in Kyiv could not satisfy present-day Ukrainian historians, just as it had disappointed their Soviet and émigré Russian predecessors. Goldenveizer found fault with each and every regime that controlled the city in various periods.

[1] For Goldenveiser's biography, see: [Будницкий, Полян, с. 207–231].

[2] In 1990 the Ukrainian publisher 'Politvydav' released a reprint edition of this book.

Metahistorical Skepticism

Why does Goldenveizer's memoir present such difficulty for modern historical narratives? In this article I will argue that his text stands out among the many personal accounts of the revolutionary period in Ukraine because it reflects the author's frustration over the failure of a civic multinational urban identity as a political project. Goldenveizer could not identify with any political regime establishing itself in Kyiv during 1917–1921, nor could he be nostalgic for the tsarist empire. As an assimilated Jewish professional, before the Revolution he was politically closest to the Kadets, but the Volunteer Army's anti-Semitism made it impossible for him to embrace the White option. As a result, Goldenveizer presents himself first and foremost as a resident of Kyiv who is alienated from all political regimes. His narrative is acerbic in tone, but it is also distinguished by the author's constant striving to undermine any grand narratives of the Revolution, as well as to counter his own perceived biases.

I propose to conceptualize such a position as *metahistorical skepticism*, that is, the author's resistance to the metanarratives grounded in his or her rejection of their affiliated political projects. Goldenveizer's strategy of identifying with the local and focusing on everydayness anticipates Jean-François Lyotard's suggestion that metanarratives should be challenged by *petits récits*, "small stories" focusing on local developments or singular events [Lyotard, p. 60]. I also argue that Goldenveizer's scepticism towards grand narratives finds its reflection in his text's *satirical* "mode of emplotment," to use Hayden White's term [White, p. 7–8]. It is precisely its dominant trope of irony that makes Goldenveiser's memoir such a fascinating read – and such a challenge, even at the level of a single paragraph, to present-day historical metanarratives that seek to stabilize the chaotic revolutionary events into narratives legitimizing imperial Russian, revolutionary Ukrainian, Soviet, or post-Soviet Russian and Ukrainian political projects.

The field of comparison in this case is exceptionally large. Dozens of prominent Ukrainian political figures left extensive memoirs covering or focusing on the revolutionary period. They included the head of the General Secretariat (Volodymyr Vynnychenko), the chairman of the Ukrainian Central Rada (Mykhailo Hrushevsky), the Ukrainian monarch in 1918 (Pavlo Skoropadsky), and the latter's foreign minister (Dmytro Doroshenko). But dozens of other ministers, generals, and diplomats who served the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) or Skoropadsky's Ukrainian State also published accounts of this period, as did some leading Bolshevik figures, most notably, Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko, Evgeniia Bosh, and Volodymyr Zatonsky.

The contemporary Ukrainian historian Ruslan Pyrih has observed that émigré memoirs were usually polemical, concerned as they were with assigning guilt for the Ukrainian side's defeat [Пирiг, с. 50]. Another feature notable in these memoirs is their ambivalent genre. Because the authors wrote

their reminiscences in order to establish their – the only correct – version of the Ukrainian national narrative of the Revolution, many of them included in their texts various documents as well as accounts of events they did not witness. This is particularly true of *Ukraina v ohni i buri revoliutsii* (Ukraine in the Fire and Storm of the Revolution) by Isaak Mazepa, who served as the head of the UNR government from April 1919 to May 1920 [Там само, с. 34]. Mazepa's book is similar in many ways to *Zamitky i materialy do istorii Ukrainskoi revoliutsii*, *1917–1920* by Pavlo Khrystiuk, who between June 1917 and March 1918 had served on the General Secretariat as chancellor and, later, as minister of internal affairs. Khrystiuk's book is usually considered a collection of primary sources, although the author's own historical account constitutes most of the text, which is at the same time openly political and often personal in nature. In a forthcoming publication about Khrystiuk's main work, Mark von Hagen compares him to Leon Trotsky, who wrote as an eyewitness, active participant, and theorist of the Revolution [Hagen]. Indeed, most Ukrainian memoirists of the Revolution were also its theorists and prominent players. In other words, their commitment to different political projects did not simply color their narratives – it defined them.

Yet, this is also the reason why one finds in their books so few details of everyday life. Even in present-day Ukrainian and diasporan historical scholarship the persistent hold of the "national paradigm" hinders the development of microhistory and the history of everyday life.[3] An excellent recent Western monograph on the work of professional bureaucrats in revolutionary Ukraine, both in the capital and the provinces, is divided into chapters according to regime changes, even though most governments of the time only really controlled Kyiv and a few other cities, if not just the special train in which they moved around the country. The fascinating chapter on "Daily Life," which actually shows important continuities across this period, is relegated to the appendices, as an afterthought of sorts [Velychenko]. In Ukraine itself, only a few recent articles suggest the slow turn to the study of everyday life, which is not easy to reconcile with the still-predominant national narrative that the Ukrainian historical profession inherited from the generation of the Revolution's participants, with the Ukrainian diaspora acting as an important intermediary in this paradigm transfer [Бойко; Скальський].

Better comparisons for Goldenveizer's memoir can be found in the writings of the Russian Mensheviks, in particular Nikolai Sukhanov and Iraklii Tsereteli. Their own political project having been defeated early on, they became sometimes acerbic observers of the titanic struggle between the more radical Reds and the (largely) more conservative Whites. Yet, neither of them wrote from the position of a city resident caught in the revolution like Goldenveizer did. Moreover, Tsereteli left the all-Russian political scene in early 1918, and Sukhanov was expelled from active politics just before he set about writing his memoirs [Церетели; Суханов].

[3] On the "national paradigm" and its continued influence, see: [Yekelchyk, p. 559–573].

It is difficult to find another memoir of the Ukrainian Revolution similar in approach to Goldenveizer's. One person who was prominent in the early stages of the Revolution and thus associated with all-Russian political trends, but was quickly sidelined during the subsequent Ukrainization of revolutionary politics, was Konstantin Oberuchev. However, his Russian-language work focuses on military matters [Оберучев]. Ironically, the memoir most similar to Goldenveizer's in terms of textual strategies originated from an impeccably Ukrainian cultural milieu: Yevhen Chykalenko's *Spohady* (Reminiscences). A wealthy landowner of peasant background, Chykalenko commanded universal respect in Ukrainian circles as a committed patron of Ukrainian culture and the publisher of the daily newspaper *Rada* (1906–1914). Because of his moderate political views, Chykalenko's position as a citizen of the Ukrainian People's Republic was that of a political outsider but social insider. He maintained close contact with Ukrainian leaders of various political stripes whom he had known for decades, and also learned about political developments from his son, Levko, a Ukrainian Social Democrat and the secretary of the Central Rada. After the Brest Peace Chykalenko was briefly considered as a candidate for a Ukrainian monarch or chairman of the cabinet, but turned down all such proposals. As the Skoropadsky regime soon revealed its reliance on Russian monarchist circles, the disappointed Chykalenko returned to his habitual persona of a sarcastic commentator speaking on behalf of the (largely nonexistent) social stratum of patriotic landowners. Chykalenko's critical stance also determines his attention to everyday life and voices "from below" – not just in the city of Kyiv, as in Goldenveizer's case, but in Ukraine more generally.

Chykalenko's satirical voice is obvious in his description of the Ukrainian army being sent against the Bolshevik forces in the winter of 1917 – an episode that would be cast in the national narrative as a heroic event:

> Коли перед Різдвом послано було армію проти большевиків, які вже захопили Харків, то по дорозі майже вся армія, в тім числі і Богданівський полк, розбіглася по домах з зброєю й кіньми. Військове начальство держало це у великій таємниці, бо ще сподівалося, що після свят козаки повернуться в свої частини, але даремні були ці сподівання – козаки раді були, що нарешті добилися додому [Чикаленко, 1932, с. 32].[4]

The conservative Chykalenko acknowledges the appeal of Bolshevism more openly than other contemporary Ukrainian figures. He quotes to others the phrase, said in the mixed Ukrainian-Russian dialect, which the great Ukrainian actor Panas Saksahansky heard from a peasant: «Знаєте,

[4] "When, just before Christmas, an army was sent against the Bolsheviks, who by then had captured Kharkiv, along the way almost all the soldiers in the army, including the Bohdan Khmelnytsky Regiment, deserted to their villages, taking with them their arms and horses. The military leadership made a great secret of it because it was still hoping that the Cossacks would return to their detachments after the holidays, but those hopes were in vain – the Cossacks were happy to reach home at last." All the English translations in this article are by the author.

у большевиків лозунги луччі, як в українців» [Чикаленко, 2004, с. 52].[5] He also records peasant perceptions of the land policies pursued by various political regimes: «Про те, що й Центральна Рада дала селянам землю, ніхто й не згадує, а всі кажуть, що Ленін та російські більшовики дали землю, а Україна одібрала» [Там само, с. 113].[6] The "Ukraine" in this case is the Skoropadsky regime that served as a façade for the German occupation, but what Chykalenko captures here is the association in peasant minds between the state's national designation and its economic policies – a perception that in the fall of 1918 favored the Bolsheviks. Chykalenko undermines the national paradigm, but he does not present the inevitable Bolshevik victory either. In keeping with the overall satirical mode of emplotment, his predictions for the future are exaggeratedly apocalyptic. While others are placing their hopes in military assistance from the Entente, he tells his acquaintances of a future in which Ukraine swallowed up again by Russia, and Ukrainian culture is completely banned. [Там само, с. 46].

Here lies the difference between Chykalenko and Goldenveizer. Although Chykalenko does not identify with any Ukrainian political party of the revolutionary period, his commitment to a modern Ukrainian cultural-identity project is unquestionable. In contrast, Goldenveizer resists being limited to the confines of ethnic politics. Alla Zeide has defined his identity even after his emigration in 1921 as "citizen of the Russian Empire," but this is an unfortunate term because it is difficult to see him as a defender of the tsarist or any other "imperial" political model [Зейде, с. 336]. Rather, Goldenveizer identifies with an all-Russian civic community, an inclusive political identity eliminating the possibility of ethnic discrimination. In the first days of the Provisional Government such a project seems possible, but after this all-Russian political window closes, Goldenveizer is reduced to the narrow niche of a culturally Russian Jewish lawyer in Ukraine, who rejects both leftist and ethnic politics of the Revolution. His standpoint becomes local, that of a Kyiv resident.

Othering the Revolution

Goldenveizer frames his metanarrative skepticism through the tropes of unfulfilled expectations and emotional downturn. Like many other contemporaries, he recalls the fall of the monarchy as a joyous time. He speaks of a «праздничное» feeling and «чувство восторга» caused by «вековая наша мечта» coming true [Гольденвейзер, 1922, с. 163].[7] Yet, the growing influence of Ukrainian political forces soon dampens his enthusiasm: «Это налагало отпечаток какой-то мрачности на наши мысли и настроения» [Там же, с. 174].[8] The story of emotional upsurge and im-

[5] "You know, the Bolsheviks have better slogans than the Ukrainians do."

[6] "Nobody remembers that the Central Rada, too, gave land to the peasantry, but all say that Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks gave the land and Ukraine took it away."

[7] "Festive" feeling, "excitement," and "our age-long dream."

[8] "This stamped a certain pessimism on our thoughts and mood."

mediate downturn is repeated in the author's narrative of the White Army's entry into Kyiv in the late summer of 1919. It all started well: «Настроение в городе было приподнятое. Все население высыпало на улицы, мелькали белые платья и праздничные наряды». Goldenveizer goes on: «Толпы народа ходили по городу с национальными флагами» and «чувствовалось всеобщее единение» [Там же, с. 259].[9]

Soon, however, Jewish pogroms and the overt anti-Semitism of the White authorities «не мого не уничтожить того радостного чувства единения и душевного подъема» [Там же, с. 269].[10] He claims that the Denikinites misunderstood the nature of their mass support and destroyed it by rejecting the civil model of citizenship: «В действительности, однако, сила движения была в лозунгах не национальных, а государственных, не русских, а российских» [Там же, с. 260].[11] Thus, Goldenveizer finds himself alienated from all the belligerents and adopts the stance of a critical, often sardonic observer of politics.

What makes his memoir so fascinating, however, is that his metahistorical skepticism does not just manifest itself in the undermining of all grand narratives of the Revolution. We also see Goldenveizer repeatedly confronting his own biases and trying to read his own memories against the grain. For example, he is clearly opposed to the Ukrainian national movement taking it upon itself to speak on behalf of the people «на юге России» [Там же, с. 197],[12] yet he leaves a memorable description of the Ukrainian National Congress in April 1917, when the chairman of the Central Rada, Professor Mykhailo Hrushevsky, called delegates to order by raising his hand, holding a white carnation. Goldenveizer remembers Hrushevsky's «волшебную власть над всей этой неотесанной аудиторией» [Там же, с. 168].[13] He uses here language similar to that of his sympathetic description of the respected Jewish writer S. An-sky speaking at the subsequent Jewish Regional Assembly in Kyiv [Там же, с. 184].

It is also clear from the text that Goldenveizer and his circle of Russophone Kyivan lawyers opposed the introduction of Ukrainian as the state language in the UNR and Skoropadsky's Hetmanate. On two occasions he describes the announcements and newspapers published in Ukrainian as reflecting the «вульгарный тон» or «грубоватый и вызывающий тон» of the Ukrainian authorities by being "rude and arrogant" [Там же, с. 195, 231].[14] These statements reflect implicit stereotypes about the "peasant language" as much as they do the narrator's dis-

[9] "The mood in the city was uplifted. The entire population went into the streets, one could see white dresses and holiday clothes." "Crowds with the [White Russian] national flag were roaming through the city." "One could feel general unity."

[10] "Could not but destroy that joyful feeling of unity and spiritual elevation."

[11] "In reality, however, the movement's strength was not in national slogans but in statist ones, and in all-Russian rather than ethnic-Russian ones."

[12] "In South Russia."

[13] "Magical power over this uncultured audience."

[14] "Vulgar tone"; "somewhat rude and provocative tone."

like of Ukrainian parties' political dominance. Yet, Goldenveizer quickly catches himself and establishes a critical distance from his persona in 1917: «Украинский язык, с которым впоследствии немного свыклись, вызывал аффектированные насмешки; никто не собирался учиться этому языку» [Там же, с. 196].[15] Moreover, he adds an ironic footnote about the «самые ярые отрицатели» of the Ukrainian language's right to exist, who somehow «судят о нем, как знатоки, и даже уличают его сторонников в том, что они исказили подлинный украинский язык галицийскими словами и т. д.» [Там же].[16]

In similar fashion, Goldenveizer balances his overall negative attitude to Ukrainian state building and Ukrainian political institutions with an acknowledgment of their commitment to representing other ethnic groups. The moment of realizing his new status was painful for Goldenveizer; as a lawyer attentive to such designations, he is the only memoirist documenting the introduction into the public domain of the new term "national minority" («национальное меньшинство»). It was first used in early July 1917 during the talks in Kyiv between the Ukrainian Central Rada and the representatives of the Provisional Government. As part of the July compromise, which caused the government crisis in Petrograd, both the Small Rada and the General Secretariat were to coopt representatives of Ukraine's minorities: «В первый раз мы услышали тогда это слово» [Там же, с. 180].[17] Like many assimilated Jews who considered themselves members of the "Russian public," this demotion to a minority in a new polity made a «тяжелое впечатление» on Goldenveizer [Там же].[18] He goes on to refer to the notion of Ukrainian independence not as «независимость» but as «самостийность» – a Russified Ukrainian term, which even today preserves negative and sarcastic connotations in the Russian language [Там же, с. 202, 229]. (The correct spelling would be «самостійність», although in modern literary Ukrainian "independence" is more often rendered as «незалежність».)

Yet, Goldenveizer is also aware of the unequal power relations existing under the old regime: The new national minorities had previously been «господа и менторы» of the Ukrainian people [Там же, с. 181].[19] He also acknowledges that the UNR offered its new minorities political representation and cultural rights: «Украинская власть сама родилась из национального движения; она еще не успела заразиться привычками "державности"» [Там же, с. 199].[20]

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[15] "The Ukrainian language, to which we later became more accustomed, caused exaggerated lampooning; nobody planned to study this language."

[16] "Most fervent deniers"; "judge it as experts and even accuse its promoters of corrupting the original Ukrainian language with Galician words, etc."

[17] "It was then that we heard this word for the first time."

[18] "Grave impression."

[19] "Overlords and mentors."

[20] "The Ukrainian administration itself was born out of a national movement; it did not yet have time to develop the habits of great-power statehood."

He then provides a balanced account of the UNR's efforts to establish the General Secretariat for the Nationalities with three deputy secretaries for Russians, Poles, and Jews to represent these ethnic groups. Later these three sections developed into separate ministries, although the Russian one was not renewed after the UNR authorities returned with the German occupational forces after Brest. It was, however, the Secretariat (later People's Ministry) for Jewish Affairs that existed the longest, until the very end of the armed struggle in Ukraine and in the emigration – and even when it was formally dissolved under Skoropadsky. The UNR also instituted the principle of "national personal autonomy" to provide the dispersed Jewish population with political and cultural rights [Там же, с. 197–200].[21]

However, Goldenveizer cannot identify with mainstream Jewish political life in the UNR. Those Jewish socialist parties that had worked closest with the Ukrainian government were much too leftist for his taste, and at the same time the inclusion of Ukrainian Jewry in the domain of mass politics through elections to the Jewish National Council resulted in political victories for the Zionists and Orthodox groups, which were equally alien to him. They won the elections even in the city of Kyiv [Там же, с. 200]. Goldenveizer feels isolated already at the Regional Jewish Assembly in July 1917, when the Bund representative, Moisei Rafes, gives a brilliant speech in Yiddish, «жаргон» that Goldenveizer calls «мало знакомый мне язык» [Там же, с. 184].[22] Yet again, although he characterizes the "demonic" Rafes as his nemesis, Goldenveizer makes a point of repeatedly emphasizing his personal courage and impressive oratorical skills. It is Rafes who delivers one of his best speeches just before German soldiers march into the building to disband the Central Rada, one the most memorable sarcastically-tinged episodes in Goldenveizer's memoirs. In a witty passage he portrays the confusion in the audience, the German sergeant's commands in broken Russian, the prominent Ukrainian Social-Democrat of German background Mykola Porsh raising his hands while still holding the fresh issue of *Neue Freue Presse*, and Chairman Hrushevsky's pointless protests in Ukrainian rather than German. The parliamentarians are finally released from detention in one of the rooms, when someone opens the door and yells in German without even facing them, in a «грубым и насмешливым тоном»: «Raus! Nach Hause gehen!» [Там же, с. 216].[23]

Goldenveizer served as a member of the Small Rada for only three weeks as a representative of the small, moderate Folkspartei, a secular "populist" party striving for Jewish autonomy. During those three weeks he constantly found himself «на самом правом крыле» in this leftist revolutionary parliament [Там же, с. 211].[24] He also felt like «бессильный зритель роковых событий» [Там же, с. 169].[25] It is ironic, yet somehow logical, that he,

[21] For a modern treatment of this topic, see: [Abramson].

[22] "Jargon"; "language I barely understood."

[23] "Rude and sneering tone"; "Get out! Go home!" (German).

[24] "On the extreme right."

[25] "A powerless observer of fatal developments."

rather than some deeply engaged Ukrainian politician, left the most detailed description of the Rada's last days. Sardonic as this description was, Goldenveizer does not paint the Ukrainian movement with a broad brush. In his subsequent narrative, he characterizes Serhii Yefremov as one of the «лучших представителей умеренного украинства», condemns Denikin's anti-Ukrainian measures, and accuses the Bolsheviks of declaring «форменную войну украинской деревне» [Там же, с. 250, 260, 281].[26]

Bringing Back the Local

Goldenveizer's description of the eventual winners, the Bolsheviks, also reveals the characteristic traits of his metahistorical skepticism. To balance his overall critical evaluation, he starts by acknowledging the feeling of «удальства, подъема, смелости» one could sense among the Bolshevik forces taking Kyiv for the first time in January 1918. Yet, his actual narrative focuses on the cruel eleven-day bombardment of the city and the subsequent manhunt for former tsarist officers and members of the Ukrainian military, who were sometimes massacred on the streets [Там же, с. 204–205].[27] Later, however, Goldenveizer's initially dispassionate tone changes to an openly sarcastic one. Instead of simply cataloguing the Bolshevik terror and social oppression, he also satirizes them as inefficient bureaucrats surrounded by «советские барышни» as receptionists and secretaries [Там же, с. 253, 257].[28] He is also one of the first chroniclers of Soviet everydayness, best symbolized in his account by such phenomena as rumors, food rations, and the inexplicable fashion for unwieldy abbreviations.

Goldenveizer speaks against the contemporary portrayal of Bolshevism «как национального еврейского движения». He argues instead that Soviet power destroyed the national institutions of all nations, and Jews could be found both among its leaders and its victims: «И если Троцкий и Урицкий евреи, то евреями же были Дора Каплан и Каннегиссер» [Там же, с 260].[29] Interestingly, a present-day Ukrainian academic takes Goldenveizer to task for misunderstanding the true national nature of Bolshevism – this time not as a Jewish, but allegedly a Russian nationalist project [Панченко, с. 176–77]. Of course, for Goldenveizer Russian nationalists are chauvinistic and anti-Semitic monarchists like Vasily Shulgin rather than Bolsheviks [Гольденвейзер, 1922, с. 260].

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[26] "One of the best representatives of moderate Ukrainians"; "real war on the Ukrainian village."

[27] "Prowess, excitement, and courage." The commander of the Red forces, the Left SR and former tsarist Lt.–Colonel Mikhail Muraviev, was eventually investigated for his encouragement of arbitrary killings and requisition of valuables after the taking of Kyiv. He suffered no punishment, but the investigative file documented in some detail his abuse of power [Слідча справа М. А. Муравйова].

[28] "Soviet demoiselles."

[29] "As a national Jewish movement." "And if Trotsky and Uritsky are Jews, Dora Kaplan and Kanegisser were Jews, too." Fanya Kaplan (real name: Feiga Roytblat), who attempted to assassinate Lenin on 30 August 1919, was also known as Dora Kaplan. The same day Leonid Kannegisser assassinated Solomon Uritsky.

In any case, Goldenveizer's identity as a narrator does not become a local one gradually, by virtue of his increasing estrangement from all the political options of the day. His brand of non-partisan civic identity is from the start grounded in the multiethnic, Russophone, liberal sphere of a major imperial city. The focus of this political project is the City Duma, although it is the building itself rather than the conservative Octobrist-dominated municipal council that becomes a new political center [Там же, с. 164].[30] Goldenveizer sees the first civic organization created in Kyiv after the collapse of the monarchy, the Executive Committee of United Civic Organizations, as symbolizing the new democratic promise. Tellingly, he insists that *ispolnitelnyi komitet* was not abbreviated at the time as *ispolkom* – the difference in word usage probably symbolizing for him the distinction between local democracy and Bolshevik authoritarianism [Там же, с. 165]. Yet, the Executive Committee outlives its promise by the fall of 1917.

Alone among the memoirists of the Revolution in Ukraine, Goldenveizer discusses at length the July 1917 elections to the City Duma. His overall negative take on this political event is predetermined by the use of the proportional vote based on party lists headed by prominent politicians. He denounces this model as one that destroys the individual relationship between urbanites and their elected counselors, as well as an open field for «политической демагогии» resulting in the election of the «ставленников чуждых народу партийных комитетов» [Там же, с. 186–187].[31] Here the interests of the urban community as a whole are presented as non-political. Nevertheless, Goldenveizer gives full credit to Mayor Yevgenii Riabtsev, an SR by political orientation and a lawyer by profession, who ended up heading, on and off, the city administration for most of the turbulent revolutionary period. The City Duma took upon itself the important task of "defending itself and, with it, all of Kyiv's residents, from the complete gallery of our conquerors" [Там же, с. 192]. It was during these numerous changes of power that the Kyivites understood that «обе борющиеся стороны одинаково враждебны и одинаково опасны для населения», because most urbanites experienced fighting within a major city not as the triumph or defeat of a larger political cause, but as the danger of becoming innocent casualties of bombardments, as well as the attendant arbitrary executions and searches [Там же, с. 205].[32] This rejection of greater political projects in favor of a humanistic emphasis on the value of life anticipates the chapters devoted to Bolshevik rule in Kyiv in 1920–1921, when the author is just one of the city residents reduced to bartering clothes for food and hoping to collect his food ration.

* * *

[30] The Executive Committee eventually relocated to Mariinsky Palace, where the city's Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were also headquartered [Гольденвейзер, 1922, с. 169].

[31] "Political demagogy"; "creatures of the party committees, which were alien to the people."

[32] "Both belligerents are equally alien and equally dangerous for the residents."

Goldenveizer's story of everyday life and politics in revolutionary Kyiv is not apolitical, for no memoir can be fully apolitical, but by grounding his narrative in the everydayness of city life he was able to establish critical distance from all the traditional interpretations of the Revolution. He also consciously tried to compensate for his own perceived biases by looking for positive traits in political phenomena and people he disliked. Subsequent historians quoted memorable passages from his text, usually with the aim of supporting their own critique of the opposite political regime. What remained unremarked, however, was his overall metahistorical skepticism that found its reflection in the mocking narrative framing. If memoirs of the late tsarist period often anticipated the advent of the revolution as a cure for social ills, Goldenveizer's work is among the first showing disillusionment with the world of radical social and ethnic politics emerging from the revolutionary upheaval.

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